

The Cherry Tree

USS George Washington (CVN 73)

Command Ombudsman Newsletter

April 2006

See Page 7 for
Tiger Cruise Update

GW Sails to Caribbean for 'Partnership of the Americas'



USS George Washington (CVN 73) and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17 departed Naval Station Norfolk, Va., April 4 as part of U.S. Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) "Partnership of the Americas" deployment.

The deployment will also provide the opportunity for U.S. and other forces to operate in a multinational environment, refine coordination, and improve interoperability. Assigned units will focus on being ready to deal with threats such as narco-terrorism and illicit trafficking, and improving training levels in a variety of mission areas.

"The Partnership of America's operations is an opportunity for first rate training and a chance to improve strike group readiness," said Rear Adm. Joseph F. Kilkenny, commander, George Washington Strike Group. "This endeavor will also strengthen our partnership with our allies who stand with us in promoting maritime security."

Spring Fling Picnic GWEFSG General Meeting

*Sponsored by the
GW Enlisted and Officers' Family Support Groups*

Tuesday May 09, 2006

6:30pm

WHEN: Saturday, April 29th

TIME: 11am to 2pm

WHERE: Picnic area NAS Oceana
Just outside the main gate on
right, across the street from the
Exchange

Bring your own picnic...we will provide desert and lots of FREE activities for the kids

Moon Bounce

DJ

Games and Contests

Prizes

This is a GREAT chance to meet other people from your GW family!!!! We hope to see YOU there!!

Stay in Touch with GW
www.spear.navy.mil/gw/
We-Care Line 444-0460
Out of the area 1-800-372-5463
GW Ombudsmen

TAMARA	(757) 544-0397
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*SHANNON	(757) 289-0540

*Shannon is a prospective Ombudsman.

The May GWEFSG General Meeting is just a couple of weeks away. We will be holding nominations and elections for the following positions: Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Member-at-large/ Sergeant at Arms.

This is an exciting new year for GWEFSG we urge anyone who is interested in running for office to attend this meeting. Please be prepared to provide a brief excerpt on yourself including goals specified to the office for which you will run. If you are unable to attend and would like to run for office please e-mail your excerpt to gwefsdpresidentnicolann@yahoo.com

Holding volunteer positions can be helpful towards future employment, scholarships, etc.

Though we have begun to hold small GWEFSG events we will be discussing larger events and "at interest" events such as play groups.

Children are welcome. Activities will be provided for them.

Please join us on **Tuesday, May 09, at 6:30 PM** in Building P-28 (located behind the Hobby Shop/adjacent to the Citgo on Persey St.) on Naval Station Norfolk. Click here for a map and directions: [Building P-28](#).

We look forward to seeing you there!

THIS JUST IN...

Arrive 30 minutes early prior to our meeting for the "Pre-Meeting POTLUCK" and partake in a little social gathering before elections!

Come and meet fellow GWEFSG members prior to our May General Meeting at our Pre-meeting Potluck. This will be a great way to meet friends and socialize. You might even find someone who shares the same interest as you!

Please bring a dish to share with the group. If you are not sure of what to bring please e-mail me at gwefsdpresidentnicolann@yahoo.com. I will advise you on what others are preparing for the potluck.

Hope to see you there for grubbs, smiles, and laughter.

Aloha,

Nicolann

President-elect

GW Officer's Spouses Club

The Officer's Spouses group are a charitable and social organization open to all officers' spouses and their families.

Janet is president of GW Officers Spouse Club and you may contact her at GWOSC@cox.net.

The Cherry Tree is an authorized publication for the families serving aboard **USS George Washington** (CVN 73). Contents herein are not the views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, or the commanding officer of **USS George Washington**.

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CVN 73
BOX 1
FPO AE 09550-2873

Commanding Officer
CAPT Garry White
Executive Officer
CAPT Kent Whalen
Command Master Chief
CMDM(SW) David Rudd

USS George Washington Visits St. Maarten

by JOC(SW/AW/IUSS) Henry W. Rice, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs Office

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, St. Maarten -- The U.S. aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) (GW) and *Carrier Air Wing Seventeen* arrived in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles April 14 for a goodwill port visit as part of the ship's current deployment. While in port, the approximately 5,000 crewmembers will have a chance to sightsee, enjoy recreational activities, and participate in various community relations projects with the citizens of St. Maarten. It marks the first port call for the ship, which left its homeport of Norfolk, Va. April 4.

This is the first time in several years that an aircraft carrier has operated in the Western Caribbean, though other U.S. Navy warships routinely operate in this region.

"This visit is a once in a lifetime opportunity for many of the Sailors on board, and the crew is really looking forward to it," said Capt. Garry White, Commanding Officer of *GW*. "They have been working extremely hard and eagerly anticipate the opportunity to experience the history and culture here. We've heard a lot about the great hospitality of the people of St. Maarten and look forward to making new friends."

The *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group, which includes USS *Monterey* (CG 61), USS *Stout* (DDG 55), and USS *Underwood* (FFG 36) is currently participating in the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) sponsored "Partnership of the Americas."

"Partnership of the Americas" is a maritime training and readiness deployment of U.S. Naval forces with countries from the Caribbean and Latin America, in support of SOUTHCOM objectives for enhanced maritime security.

"Through training, operations and communications, 'Partnership of the Americas' will strengthen our partnership with our allies who stand with us in promoting maritime security," said Rear Adm. Joseph Kilkenny, Commander of the *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group. "fort."

GW was commissioned in 1992, and last visited the island in 1997. The ship is 1,092 feet long, and displaces more than 95,000 tons. The flight deck covers more than 4.5 acres. The ship can reach speeds greater than 30 knots.



Mann, Faustino Selected as GW Sailors of the Quarter

By PHAN Kenneth R. Hendrix, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, Atsea—USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) (GW) recently selected their Sailor of the Quarter (SOQ) and Junior Sailor of the Quarter (JSOQ).

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW/AW/FMF) Yolanda Mann of medical's dental division was chosen as the SOQ, and Electronics Technician 3rd Class (SW/AW) Oscar Faustino of combat systems' CS-9 division was named JSOQ.

Mann is *GW*'s only dental hygienist, while Faustino is in charge of supply parts for his work center, and is the copier technician for 96 copiers aboard *GW*.

Their work ethic and achievements set them apart from their counterparts both at work and off duty.

"I try to be true team player, volunteer and get out when we have different events," Mann said. "By leading by example, I make sure that I contribute my time and effort."

"I've always work hard at doing what I have to do to get the job done," Faustino said. "No matter what it is, whether I am working with supplies, parts or being a technician."

Their department leading chief petty officers

nominated each Sailor and submitted information about them for board members to score.

"Petty Officer Mann had all the blocks checked, and she goes above and beyond," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/AW) Brian Hock of dental. "She went out of her way to help her Sailors, and throughout the command, she is involved with different boards and committees."

"The bottom line is I look for someone who takes initiative, makes reports back without even being asked and goes above and beyond," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Nealon of CS-9. "Petty Officer Faustino exceeds that on a daily basis."

Their positive attitudes and outlook about the way procedures should be done show they enjoy their jobs.

"I would definitely recommend getting out there and becoming a team player, going above and beyond your job, and not complaining," Mann said. "Also think about what you can do to help contribute to the *GW* spirit."

Mann also serves as a command assistant warfare coordinator and volunteers

and mentors in her free time. Faustino takes on extra duties by helping other departments in finding supply parts, Navy stock numbers, price quotes or just helping other shipmates with their gear.

"It's all about your work ethic," Faustino said. "No one should just work to receive Navy achievement medals, caps, medals and early promotions. Work hard, because you need good work ethic to succeed in life."

In the mix of everything, they kept a level head and have a humble perspective about the accomplishment.

"I found out that evening over the IMC with everyone else, and it was very shocking," Mann said. "I was surprised, and it actually didn't sink in till the next day when everyone was saying congratulations."

"It's a reflection of not only myself, but my department," Faustino said. "Without my guys doing what they do, I would not be able to shine or have been selected as the JSOQ."

As SOQ and JSOQ, the two are entitled to head of the line privileges for all ship's stores, crew's barbershop, post office, personnel, disbursing, enlisted dining facility and the liberty lines.

George Washington, CVW 17 Host Brazilian Naval Officers

By Photographer's Mate Airman Kenneth R. Hendrix, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, At sea - USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) and *Carrier Air Wing 17* hosted four Brazilian naval officers during the first few days of "Partnership of the Americas," giving the officers an opportunity to see U.S. Navy technology and practices in carrier flight operations.

Partnership of the Americas is a U.S. Southern Command-sponsored training and readiness deployment designed to strengthen regional partnerships and improve multinational



interoperability. Having the Brazilian officers on board is just one of the ways to build good working relationships with U.S. allies in the region.

"When we heard about this opportunity, we knew this was one of the important things

we wanted to participate in this year," said Marine Capt. Brent Dodd of Southern Command U.S. Military Liaison of Brazil, who helped coordinate the visit. "This operation is about building relationships and engaging with a country in a military-to-military sense."

The four officers on board are air traffic controllers or pilots and are familiar with the radarscopes and carrier landing systems *GW* uses.

During their time on board, the officers toured the

ship and saw U.S. aircraft carrier operations from top to bottom, seeing flight operations from primary flight to carrier air traffic control center.

"I felt good about the interaction with them," said Lt. Thomas Decker, Air Operations division officer. "They wanted to see how we did flight operations and how we perform our operations. They said our operations were pretty much similar to theirs, but it's the technology and the equipment that is different."

George Washington Gives Monterey a Fill Up

By PHAN Kenneth R. Hendrix, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, At sea - USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) (*GW*) successfully completed a fueling at sea (FAS) with the guided missile cruiser USS *Monterey* (CG 61) April 21 in the south Caribbean Sea.

The fuel allows *Monterey* to carry on with the operations for "Partnership of the Americas."

GW's deck department and fuels division supplied 300,000 gallons of fuel over a four-to-five hour time period to *Monterey*.

"Sometimes aircraft carriers can be the duty tanker," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) Petty Officer Second Class Rodney Johnson. "We can fuel smaller ships in our strike group."

"Every boatswain mate in the deck department prefers to send or receive fuel," said Lt. Terrell Johnson, *GW*'s assistant first lieutenant. "We live for this type of evolution."

This particular FAS evolution put the two *GW* departments' experience and training to the test.

"On station 21, we had a lot of experience and knowledge," Lt. Johnson said. "Most importantly they were second and third classes that have never experienced that type of situation. Now they see these situations are very real and know how to come together collectively, re-group, fix the situation at hand and still be able to send the rig."

The junior sailors experienced real-time hands on training and an understanding that everyone's job, no matter how big or small plays a key role completing the task at hand.

"This is my first FAS," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate Airman (Fuels) Kyle Huneke of *GW*'s fuels division. "I learned what to do in case a hose disconnects, as well as the importance of my job to make sure we didn't put any pressure on the hose and to make sure the couplings were not over pressurized."

Everything was able to run smoothly and prevail through open and collective communication collected and passed along through the communication hub.

"We monitor the distance between the ships, fueling station 21 and make sure pumping and line tension is ok," said Seaman Jason Bowen of *GW*'s second division.

In the end, *Monterey* received the fuel required to operate and *GW* was able to overcome the unexpected obstacles.

"We learned we can really come together as a team, and we can fix anything to get the job done right and efficiently," said Bowmen.

GW and *Monterey* are operating in the Caribbean Sea for "Partnership of the Americas," a maritime training and readiness deployment of U.S. Naval forces with countries from the Caribbean and Latin America, in support of U.S. Southern Command objectives for enhanced maritime security.



GW, CVW 17 Conduct COMREL in St. Maarten

by Chief Journalist (SW/AW/IUSS) Henry W. Rice, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs Office

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles - USS George Washington (CVN 73) and the embarked air wing, Carrier Air wing Seventeen completed 1,246 hours of community service at various locations in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles April 15.

Two hundred and seventy seven Sailors volunteered to work at local schools, a home for the elderly, an orphanage and other locals throughout the Island to demonstrate the willingness of the Navy to work with local communities in the region in humanitarian assistance and community relations projects.

"This COMREL effort went phenomenally well," said Capt. Garry White, GW's commanding officer. "It is important that Sailors serve in an ambassador's role during port visits. Events like this are great, because there is positive interaction between the Navy and the local community."

Sailors were out painting fences, benches and playground equipment at three schools. Other Sailors did some handy work and clean up at a house inhabited by an elderly blind woman. A vegetable garden was being cultivated at a local orphanage and CVW 17 Sailors were moving rocks and entertaining the children.

"Community projects like this are



important, because we in the Navy have an opportunity to help those who are less fortunate," said AD First Class (AW) Gerald Reed from Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 7 (HS 7). "We've got a bunch of Sailors out here from different squadrons and people with different backgrounds and we are working hard together, making a difference. It is good for morale."

GW anchored off the coast of St. Maarten, and although many people could see the ship, few could actually tour the ship. Asha Stevens, the community relations coordinator for the local Navy League and the superintendent of the Hillside Christian School, said the Sailors' visit and work will be remembered for a long time.

"These children could not make it to

the ship, so the Sailors came to the ship," said Stevens. "It is so wonderful that these Sailors took the time to help the school and the community. When the ship leaves, they will leave a legacy. The children will remember this day for a long time to come."

Stevens was impressed with the number of volunteers from GW, as well as their eagerness to work hard. "This is just great. The admiral, the captain, the chaplains, everyone is out here helping," she said. "They can all be at the beach, lying in the sun or sightseeing, but they chose it come out here and help. We are grateful, and this speaks volumes to our community."

GW Sailors have some experience with community relations projects. During 2005, they completed more than 25,000 hours of volunteer work in Newport News. Being overseas offers the Sailors a chance to meet and interact with peoples of different cultures.

"Doing community service gives me a chance to interact with local people," said Storekeeper Second Class Neathra Stanberry from GW's supply department. "I found that these children are just like what I was like when I was younger. Even though we are in a foreign country, you learn that people are people. I had a great time."

GW Hosts Onboard 'Partnership' Reception

By Journalist Second Class (SW/AW) Jerry Foltz, George Washington Carrier Strike Group Public Affairs

USS GEORGE WASHINGTON, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles - USS George Washington (CVN 73) hosted a reception for distinguished visitors April 15 while anchored in the Great Bay area of St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles.

"I could not be more pleased with the warmth and hospitality that we have received since arriving here," said Capt. Garry R. White, GW's commanding officer.

Guests included Rear Adm. Joseph Kilkenny, Commander, George Washington Carrier Strike Group, who encouraged the the local population to interact with Sailors during their four day port call to the Caribbean island. "Please find out from them what we are all about," he said. "You will find them to be just as thrilled about you as you are of them."

Guests were greeted at the fleet landing facility and ferried to the ship. Once on board, guests were treated to food prepared by GW's culinary specialists, ice sculptures and a local steel drum band. More than 100 chiefs and officers from GW were on hand at the event and had a chance to talk with the guests.

"It is great to see us merge as one people, knowing that we are all sharing the same goal," said Lt Rodney Moss, GW's fuels division officer, who sat in to play backup drums for the band.

Guests also had an opportunity to ride one of GW's aircraft elevators to the flight deck to observe evening colors.

Partnership of the Americas is a maritime training and readiness deployment of U.S. Naval forces with countries from the Caribbean and Latin America, in support of U.S. Southern Command objectives for enhanced maritime security.



Military, Families Can Get Online Mental Health Screening

By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Military members and families coping with the stress of overseas deployments and other potential health-threatening issues can log onto the Internet to get help, a U.S. military psychologist said here April 18.

Service members from all components and their families can obtain a mental health self-assessment or screening through a Web site co-sponsored by DoD and Screening for Mental Health Inc., a nonprofit organization, said Air Force Col. Joyce Adkins, a psychologist with the Force Health Protection and Readiness directorate at the Defense Department's Health Affairs office.

"The [online] screening actually gets you to where you need to be in terms of counseling," Adkins said. "Once you do one of the screening checklists, it will give you the benefits that are available to you."

The Web site, brought online in January, augments other DoD mental health assistance resources, Adkins said. People logged onto the site are asked to answer a series of questions. The program "grades" the completed survey, Adkins said, and gives people an evaluation of their present mental health and provides assistance resources, if deemed necessary.

Other DoD-endorsed health sites tell customers how to access mental health counseling services but do not pro-

vide an online mental health screening program, Adkins said.

National Guard and reserve members returning from overseas deployments also are authorized to use the Web site, Adkins said. Returning reserve component members have two years of health benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"And it's totally free to them," the colonel pointed out.

Such services are especially important today, Adkins said, because of the potential stressful effects deployments can have on both military and family members.

"It's a concern that people don't understand what their thoughts and feelings mean as they come back from deployment," Adkins said. "As they re-integrate with their families, there may be conflict in the family that's not easily resolved."

The mental health screening Web site and other related programs available to service members and their families provide "a level of benefits and a level of service to help them understand what services are available to them for mental health issues," Adkins said.

To access the Mental Health Self-Assessment Program, visit <https://www.militarymentalhealth.org/welcome.asp>.

Child Development Organization Aids Military Children, Families

By Steven Donald Smith, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Recognizing that children of service members often face challenges that other children do not, the nonprofit child development organization "Zero To Three" launched a special project geared specifically toward military families.

"Supporting military children is an essential element of supporting military families in general," Dorinda Williams, a Zero To Three training and consultation specialist, said in an interview. "Zero To Three recognizes that military parents often face extreme and emotionally draining circumstances, and we try to provide support through information and resources that translate into increased capacity to meet the emotional needs of babies and toddlers."

April is officially the "Month of the Military Child," which celebrates military young ones and raises awareness about their unique situation. Zero To Three works toward these ends all year long by supporting the healthy development and well-being of military children by educating their parents on child-rearing techniques.

"We are a national, multidisciplinary organization that advances our mission by informing, educating and supporting adults who influence the lives of infants and toddlers," Williams said.

Zero To Three concentrates on critical issues affecting young children and their families, including early language and literacy development and the impact of culture on early childhood development. The organization is adept at translating what is known from the science of early childhood development into practical tools and resources for professionals, programs, parents and policymakers, Williams said.

Over the past several years, Zero to Three has become increasingly involved with issues affecting military children. For instance, the group established a military projects division

specifically aimed at the needs of babies and toddlers of military families.

One of the division's projects is "Operation Parenting Edge," a partnership of the Marine Corps and the federal Early Head Start program. This venture is a two-year training and consultation pilot project that supports Early Head Start staff by increasing sensitivity to how babies and toddlers may be impacted by military-specific stresses, Williams said.

The organization provides training through on-site visits, special meetings, and teleconferences.

"This project stems from the recognition that, with current world events ... military families and resources available to them may be increasingly strained," she said. "It is our hope that this project will serve as a model of how the military can collaborate with civilian resources to further expand support to families."

In addition, Zero To Three hosted a Defense Department summit in Washington, D.C., in November. The summit brought together professionals supporting military families from around the world. The overall intent of the summit was to promote the interests and needs of babies and toddlers through specialized trainings and workshops, Williams said.

Zero To Three also currently is developing a media campaign in response to the needs of military installations particularly effected by repeated and extended deployments. The campaign "will assist caregivers in recognizing how babies and toddlers may be affected by military separations and relocations, and offer ways to support their young children, as well as themselves, during times of military stress," she said.

The organization's Web site offers extensive information for military families. It features articles by military professionals and parents on topics unique to the military community.

Tiger Cruise Update

GW now has been approved for the Tiger Cruise out of Mayport, Fla. Check with your Sailor for dates and time. And remember... there is always the potential that operational requirements between now and the end of deployment could force a cancellation. You are strongly recommended to make travel arrangements that can be cancelled if necessary.

Over the past several weeks, we have seen a positive response about the Tiger Cruise, many directly from family members. Many of the questions are worth sharing with everyone and you can find them at <http://gw.fcc.navy.mil>.

GW has arranged for chartered transportation at a reasonable cost per person from the Hampton Roads area. You may manifest yourself on a coach bus from Norfolk by calling the Tidewater Bus Service ((757)-487-1278). Of course, Tigers and their sponsors may also arrange for other means of transportation also at their own expense.

Chaperones for unaccompanied minors? This is a big deal and GW has two ways of addressing it: (1) GW is planning on an advance team who will meet Tigers at the buses, identify unaccompanied minors, and help to see that they are monitored (particularly at either end of the journey and at rest stops along the way); and (2) GW will be attempting to help identify adult Tigers riding the buses who are willing to help monitor unaccompanied minors. The bottom line, however, is that sponsors are responsible for their Tigers at all times. GW will try and assist you, but you must make arrangements now for your unaccompanied minors.

More information will be passed as it becomes available. If you have questions/comments/concerns please send an e-mail (GWTigerCruise@washington.navy.mil).

GW Sailors Fit and Ready for 'Partnership of the Americas'

By JOC(SW/AW/IUSS) Henry W. Rice, George Washington Carrier Strike Group

USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) (GW) completed its 2006 spring cycle for their physical readiness tests (PRT) March 30 and the results show a major improvement over previous cycles.

Lt. Jacqueline Pollock, GW's fitness boss, tabulated the PRT results of more than 2,600 Sailors and said the reports show there were more than 100 fewer failures this cycle as compared with the fall 2005 cycle.

Additionally, the command computed more than 2,900 body composition assessments (BCA) and they had a 50 percent decrease in BCA failures from the previous cycle.

"Everyone talks about numbers and obviously they are a great way to test and assess a Sailor's fitness," said Pollock. "But GW Sailors know that being fit is more than that. Of course we want everyone to pass the PRT, but more than that, we want to give them every opportunity to better themselves."

According to Pollock, GW takes an aggressive approach to fitness and is committed to the wellness of Sailors. GW offers a variety of exercise classes, as well as courses in topics like nutrition, life skills and smoking cessation to give Sailors the tools they need to have a healthier lifestyle.

"On board GW we try and come up creative ways to make fitness

fun for the crew," she said. "We offer Sailors a variety of exercise classes, food choices and educational programs aimed at helping the crew. And whatever we do, we want to make sure it is something they enjoy and keeps them motivated."

GW Sailors take advantage of the programs on board the ship, especially the more than 50 group exercise classes that take place while the ship is underway.

According to the log for the first week of March, more than 800 Sailors attended classes and Pollock estimates more than 200 Sailors attended and were not required to sign the log. Many more Sailors attend nutrition classes and are enrolled in the Ship Shape course. Pollock and the ship's medical team also provide individual counseling and courtesy weigh-ins for the entire crew.

"We want to make sure we are giving GW Sailors every chance to succeed," said Pollock. "We don't want them on the 'three-mile a year club.' We want them always thinking fitness and giving them what they need to meet their goals."

The programs have been successful for GW Sailors from all levels of the chain of command.

"GW has provided me with a lot of inspiration and information that helps me strive for my goals," said Boatswain's Mate Second Class

(SW) Marlon Harris from GW's deck department. "I have lost almost 30 pounds and seven inches off my waist. I am very happy to be part of the GW crew."

"Because of past medical problems it made it hard for me to really workout continuously," said Master Chief Information Technologist (SW/AW) Yvonne Kitchen from GW's combat systems department. "Now they offer so much, who can refuse?"

The Navy believes having a fit fleet means being ready.

"The goal is that everyone from the highest-ranking admiral to the newest seaman recruit is motivated to adopt a personal plan to get fit, stay fit and set an example of physical readiness others want to follow," said Vice Adm. J. C. Harvey, Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel. "We simply cannot afford to have a Navy that isn't 100 percent lean, fit and ready to take the fight to our enemies at a moment's notice."

From carrying litter during a mass casualty drill to running correspondence up to the bridge, there are many tasks on board GW that require Sailors to be in shape.

"You have more energy when you work out," said Hospital Corpsman Second Class Monique Rodriguez, who is an exercise leader and Ship Shape instructor. "Therefore, if increase your fitness level you are

going to be more productive at work."

Rodriguez, a command fitness leader for five years, reported to GW in September 2005 and immediately noticed the culture of fitness. "There were many programs in place and you could see Sailors motivated to improve," she said. "Since I have been here it has been growing. You can see classes during the day with hundreds of people almost filling an entire hangar bay. It is impressive and the crew is enthusiastic about it. It is not just a trend, people are changing their lifestyles."

GW is continuing to encourage healthy lifestyles and to decrease the PRT and BCA failure rates by infusing the fitness program with new ideas with their philosophy of keeping it fun. The ship will start another installment to their successful competition "The Biggest Loser." In this contest, teams of five compete to see who loses the most overall weight. For the second installment, Sailors who failed the BCA are being encouraged to participate on teams with CFL mentors.

Other contests include an iron man competition, where bulking up muscles is the goal, and more running events.

We are trying to find events that interest everyone," said Rodriguez. "We get a tremendous amount of support from the chain of command, and that is what makes GW number one when it comes to fitness."

A Letter to Military Children from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

*Special message from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,
Marine Gen. Peter Pace*

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- I want to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary contributions of our nation's military families, who have faced many challenges - from family separations to frequent moves - with great courage. I would especially like to acknowledge a special source of inspiration: children of military families.

You are patient and understanding when duty calls and your mom or dad cannot attend a soccer game, music recital, birthday party, or other important family or school activity. You are heroes in a quiet, thoughtful way, and I am grateful for the unconditional love you give your mom and dad. Many of you have experienced the sad and sometimes frightening experience of having your mom or dad far from home, serving around the globe in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Through your personal courage and support, you serve this nation, too - and I am proud of you!

Frequent moves are a way of life for the military child. It is never easy to say goodbye to friends and familiar routines, to begin again in a new school, a new neighborhood - and sometimes a new country! But your resilience and self-confidence are strengths that others admire, including your parents.

Growing up in a military family offers some challenges, but it also provides some special rewards. You can be proud of your mom and dad for their brave defense of this great country. Your love and support sustains them. So thank you for being there for mom and dad. You are American patriots and role models for us all.

**ARMED SERVICES YMCA OF HAMPTON ROADS
Regional Headquarters and Beach Family Center**
1465 Lakeside Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455
Phone: 757-363-1884 Fax: 757-363-1953

Ben Moreell Housing Center
428 Ingram Loop
Norfolk, VA 23505
Phone: (757) 423-7500
Email: asymcabm@juno.com

Oceana Community Center
1200 South Birdneck Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Phone: 757-433-2055
Email: asymcaoceana@juno.com

Military Hospitality Suite
Norfolk International Airport
Phone: 757-857-6040

Willoughby Bay Community Center
8181 O'Conner Crescent
Norfolk, VA 23505
Email: asymcawb@juno.com

Norfolk Crossing Community Center
BLDG # CA307 on Diven Lane
Norfolk, VA 23505
Phone: 757-440-1555
Email: asymcanc@juno.com

ARMED SERVICES YMCA OF HAMPTON ROADS

This is a nice program offered to all military. These just take place in the military communities however all military are invited to attend any event.

The mission of the Armed Services YMCA of Hampton Roads is to improve Quality of Life for junior enlisted military personnel, their families, through values oriented social, recreational, personal development, crisis prevention, deployment separation and child care programs.

There are many programs that the ARMED SERVICES YMCA offers check out your local community to see what they have available. There are a wide assortment of activities.

Below you will find a free bread program schedule. This program offers free bread to military families one day of the week at different locations in the area. It starts at 10 am till bread is gone.

Bread Program

- * Ben Moreell Community Center - first Wednesday of month.
- * Oceana Community Center - second Wednesday of every month.
- * Norfolk Crossing Community Center - third Wednesday of every month.
- * Willoughby Community Center - forth Wednesday of every month.
- * In the event that there is a fifth Wednesday it will be at our Regional location.

Please have military ID cards

We are always happy to serve those who serve America!

UP COMING EVENTS OFFERED BY THE ARMED SERVICES YMCA OF HAMPTON ROADS

They have a Daddy/Daughter Dance that is coming up in June at Breezy Point Officers Club. Time and Date will go up soon.

Also you might like a Parents Night Out: Offered the second Friday of each month.

Fee schedule is E-1 to E-4 \$3.00 for first child/\$10.00 max per family.

E-5 and above \$10.00 for first child and \$20.00 max per family.

Time is 6:30 to 10:00. Your children will participate in a make it and take it craft.

While you are gone. Snack is provided (in the past they have had pizza, chicken nuggets, this month is purple scrambled eggs).

Registration must be done at building at 1465 Lakeside Road.

Please call for more info (ask for child care).

They will also be holding a summer camp. This year's theme is travel the world with the ASYMCA. They will talk about different countries and do field trips. All the fees for their licensed child care are based on rank. They also have a preschool program and school age before and after care. Call for details.

One of their biggest fundraisers MUD RUN an 8 mile run held on Little Creek, August 8th is also coming up. If you would like to participate go to active.com to register or go over to the 1465 Lakeside Road building.

And as always it is nice that we have all these wonderful programs but they couldn't be put on without our wonderful volunteers. There is always a need for volunteers.

They need building things done, office work, homecoming volunteers to go down and help pass out things at the pier.

So if you have time or know someone that is interested please give them a call and let them know that the Armed Services YMCA of Hampton Roads could use their help.